

Lifegiver as an epithet of the Saviour, and trace its Mesopotamian origin.¹ Without wanting in the slightest degree to deny the obvious fact that the conception of Life plays a considerable rôle in the Indo-Iranian religious foundations of Gnostic speculation and religion, a fact which has besides been emphasized by the writer in an earlier work², we conclude in this connexion that it is only in Mesopotamian religion (with its offshoots in Canaanite and Israelitic mythical ideas³) that we find the religious ideas of Life developed into a coherent complex of mythical images expressed in concrete symbols from everyday life, such as garden, tree, water, house, gate etc.

¹ See below ch. X.

² See Widengren, *Religionens värld* p. 360, 365.

³ That the term and idea of Life are very impressive religious symbols in the ancient Near East, has been emphasized by S. A. Cook in his Notes to the third edition of Robertson Smith, *Religion of the Semites*, pp. 555 ff.

As an additional remark we may add two references. So e.g. it is said: "Adam was set at the gate of Life", James, *The Apocryphal New Testament* p. 184 (Book of the Resurrection of Christ); and further "the gate of Life" is mentioned in Phillips, *The Doctrine of Addai* p. 10 (transl.), p. 4 (text).

CHAPTER II.

The Evil Power.

The description of the Evil Power, the Prince of Darkness, as given in Fihrist had attracted the attention of Kessler, and had already by him been compared with the appearance of Tiāmat and other chaos-powers in Mesopotamian mythology.¹ The relevant passage in the picturesque description of al-Nadīm runs as follows.

ومن تلك الأرض المظلمة كان
الشیطان... رأسه كرامس اسد
وبدنه كبدن تئین وجناحه
كجناح طائر وذنبه كذنب
حوت وارجله اربع كارجل
الدواب.

And from this dark earth Šaiṭān came into existence... his head like the head of a lion, and his body like the body of a dragon, and his wings like the wings of a bird, and his tail like the tail of a great fish, and his four feet like the feet of reptiles.²

Flügel, *Mani* text p. 53, transl. p. 86 = al-Nadīm, *al-Fihrist* p. 329.

The very composite appearance of the Dark Power recurs in the Coptic texts now available. There are in the Kephalaia two passages confirming the impressive picture of Fihrist, viz. p. 30:34—31:2 and p. 77:26—78:3. Their mutual relations have been analyzed by Böhlig, to whose investigation we may refer.³ We may add that there is also in the Coptic psalms an

¹ See Kessler, *PRE* 12 (1903) p. 227.

² According to Polotsky, *Manichäismus*, Pauly-Wissowa, *Realencykl. Suppl.* Bd. VI col. 250 the word *dayābb* ought to be understood as a mistranslation of an original Iranian *dēv*, demon, taken as *dēvak*, worm. That this cannot be correct has been shown by Wikander, *Vayu* I p. 202, who, however, would also seem to assume an Iranian background for the description of the Evil Power. In view of the evidence adduced here, this is completely improbable.

³ See Böhlig, *Eine Bemerkung z. Beurteilung der Kephalaia*, *ZNW* 37 (1938) p. 15.

occasional reference to "this lion-faced dragon", *ṣṣṣṣṣṣ ṣṣṣṣṣṣ* (*Psalm-Book* II p. 57:18).

Brandt has pointed out the close resemblance between this conception of the Evil Principle and the corresponding account of the Ruler of the Dark given by the Mandaean *Ginzā*.¹

רִשָּׁה דְּאִרְיָא גִּישׁוּמָה דְּחִתְּתָא
נִנְפָּה דְּנִשְׂרָא נִנְמָבָה דְּרִיקָא
כְּדָה וְלִיגְרָה דְּלִאֲטִאבָּא
His head that of a lion, his body
that of a dragon, his wings those
of an eagle, his flanks those of a
tortoise, his hands and feet those
of a beast.

Lidzbarski, *Ginzā* p. 278: 19—21 =
Petermann, *R. Ginzā* p. 280: 2—3.

It is not difficult to trace this symbol of a composite monster back to ancient Mesopotamian times. The latest researches in the different types of the dragon in Mesopotamian art affords us various illustrations of an iconographic pattern very closely approaching the account given in Manichaeism and Mandaean literature. For the most part, this monster has the head or the mouth of a lion, it has wings like a bird, its body is that of a dragon, and its conventional name in scientific literature is for that reason the "winged dragon".² In return we have to note a slight deviation in so far that its feet seem to be not those of reptiles, but those of a bird of prey. More rarely to be met with is the idea that the dragon has a lion's paws.³ Of course there are dragons in the glyptic art of Mesopotamia showing the feet of *reptilia*, but the winged dragon does not seem to be provided with them. This insignificant difference may, however, be disposed of in view of the value of the pattern exhibited in the art of Mesopotamia. And we may add that already *Ti'āmat* in the Epic of Creation is clearly distinguished by the characteristics of a dragon, even if not especially a winged one, a fact coinciding with the relevant data of art.⁴

¹ See Brandt, *Mandäische Schriften*, p. 226.

² As such it is listed by Frankfort, *Cylinder Seals*, General Index.

³ The text *BE* XXIX 1 No. 4:3 has: "the *ušumgal* with lion's paws, a giant cricket with wings outspread", quoted by van Buren, *Dragon in Ancient Mesopotamia*, *Or* 15 (1946) p. 17.

⁴ For the data belonging to the history of Mesopotamian art, see van Buren, *Or* 15 (1946) pp. 4, 9 f., 17, 34 ff.

According to Mani, the Principle of the Dark, before trying to invade the realm of Light, perceived from a distance that there was "something pleasant".¹ The Dark was thus possessed by a longing for Light, which eventually resulted in an attempt at securing the dominion over the kingdom of Light.

With this motif we may compare a passage from an old Mesopotamian myth where the evil principle, the Storm God *Zū*, feels a desire for the highest power when seeing the emblems of the sovereignty.

ip-šit^D *En-lil-ú-tu i-na-aṭ-ṭa-la* His eyes behold the exercise of Enlil-
i-na-šu ship,
a-gi-e be-lu-ti-šu na-al-ba-aš the crown of his sovereignty, the
ilu-ti-šu robe of his divinity.
dup šimāti [ilu-ti]-šu^D *Zū* The tablets of destinies of his divinity
it-ta-na-ṭal-ma *Zū* beholds again and again.
it-ta-na-ṭal-ma a-bi ilī ilu And as he beholds again and again
Dēr^{ki} the father of the gods, the
god of *Dēr*,
uḫ-su^D *En-lil-ú-ti iṣ-ša-bat* he conceives in his heart a desire
i-na lib-bi-šu for Enlilship.

CT XV Pl. 39:5—11, transl. Heidel, *Babylonian Genesis*
p. 122, *KB* VI:1 p. 46.²

The essential point in this comparison is the desire for power over the heavenly world felt by the evil principle, and his subsequent attempt at securing for himself the supreme control over the universe. When *Zū* has succeeded in snatching the tablets of destiny the immediate step to be taken by the gods is, of course, that of recapturing these tablets. In order to carry out this task, several gods are asked to go and fight the evil power *Zū*. One after another declines the proposal, holding himself not a match for the terrible adversary, until at last *Marduk* apparently undertakes to recover the powerful symbol.³ In the

¹ See Mitchell, *Ephraim's Prose Refutations* I p. LX, text p. 64:10—12.

² "Enlilship" is the term designating supreme rulership among the gods. Enlil is the god of *Dēr*, written *Dur-an-ki*, see however Heidel, *Babylonian Genesis* p. 122 n. 4.

³ See Heidel, *Babylonian Genesis*, p. 125. *Marduk* is actually styled "the one who crushed the skull of *Zū*", Hehn *BA* V p. 309:5.

Mánichæan system the Father of Greatness meets the emergencies of the rise of Darkness by calling into existence various emanations by whom at last the Dark is overcome and equilibrium restored in the world. We will later have to analyze the resemblances between Marduk going out to fight the Power of Evil and the Manichæan Primal Man descending for his combat with the Ruler of Darkness.

When speaking of the cosmological beliefs of Mani we may also refer to the curious notion that the conquered satellites of the Ruler of the Dark, the so-called Archons, are chained and put in certain places in the heavens. This their being put in chains (or crucified) and placed in the skies is apparent from the texts.¹

Now, this mythical conception of the conquered gods having their places in heaven allotted to them seems to have its ultimate origin in an old Mesopotamian theologoumenon which has acquired a literary form in the Babylonian Epic of Creation. When Marduk has vanquished Tiāmat, Kingu, and their followers, he does not kill anyone of them except Kingu (whom he has taken prisoner) unless we include Tiāmat, who was however killed already in open battle. After his victory Marduk slays Kingu as a vicarious sacrifice for all the other gods in conformity to his words:

ar-nu-uš-šú lu-ú-šá-aš-šá-a pa- I will make him bear his punishment
šá-ḫi-iš tuš-ba in order that you may sit in peace.

Enūma Elish VI: 26, transl. Heidel,
Babylonian Genesis p. 35.²

After having thus executed Kingu, Marduk proceeds to dispose of the conquered deities in the following manner:

^DMarduk šar-ri ilū ú-za-’i-iz Marduk, the king of the gods, divided
ša ^DA-nun-na-ki gim-rat-su the totality of the Anunnaki on
nu e-liš u šap-liš high and below.

¹ One has to compare Theodore bar Kōnay, Pognon, *Coupes Mandaites* p. 128 f., *CSCO Scriptores Syri* Ser. II Vol. 66 p. 315 (= Cumont, *Recherches* I p. 36) with *Acta Archelai* ch. 8 ed. Beeson p. 11: 5. Cf. Burkitt, *Religion of the Manichees* p. 28 f.; Polotsky, *Manichäismus* col. 254.

² The word *arnu* is a complex conception including both punishment and sin, see Widengren, *Psalms of Lamentation* p. 175.

ú-ad-di a-na ^DA-nim te-re-tuš He appointed (them) to Anu to
na-ša-ru watch his decrees,
5×60 ina šamēc̄ ú-ki-in a-na 300 he placed in the heavens as a
ma-šar-tu watch.

Enūma Elish VI: 39—42, transl. Heidel,
Babylonian Genesis, p. 37.¹

The Aramaic term corresponding to *mašartu* is *maṭṭartā*. In Mandæan literature this word plays a great part in the conception of the soul's ascent after death in passing through the heavenly spheres. During its ascension, its *massiqṭā*, the soul, has to pass several *maṭṭarātā*, watch-houses. The soul carrying the heavenly letter² arrives at such a watch-house, according to a description given in the Liturgies.

פארהא ואזיל נישמא The soul flies and goes away,
אלמא למאטרא דשובא מטא until it arrived at the watch-house
of the Seven.

ראב מאכסאי דהחזיונא The chief customers who saw it
מדאנמריא ואמרין were whispering and saying:
מאן כידבה לענוורתא "Who wrote the letter,
דעניש בראזה לאמרא of which no man knew its secrecy?"

Lidzbarski, *Mandäische Liturgien* p. 112: 8—10.

There are many watch-houses, for they are often mentioned in the plural, *maṭṭarātā*. In one of the songs of Left Ginza they are called the watch-houses of the sun, the moon, the fire, the Seven, and that of Rūhā (Lidzbarski, *Ginza* pp. 525 ff.). This cannot have been the original conception for, as Bousset contends, the Watch-houses must from the outset have been understood as the spheres of the planets.³ The soul crying for help when passing these obstacles in its way is met by its own higher Ego, who brings it safely to its goal, the *terminus* of its *massiqṭā*

¹ Text after the new material published by Ebeling *MAOG* XII 4 and v. Soden *ZA* 47 (1941—42) p. 3.

² For the conception of the heavenly letter see Reitzenstein, *Das iranische Erlösungsmysterium* pp. 67 ff.

³ See Bousset, *Die Religion der Mandäer*, *Theol. Rundsch.* 20 (1917) p. 197 f. See also Schou Pedersen, *Bidrag til en analyse af de mandaeiske skrifter* pp. 122 ff.

Archon, and questioned by him as to His identity and business.¹ Obviously the revision of the Syriac text has been carried out with a view to removing the scandalizing effect caused by the notion of the terrible Archon.²

The Archons, as is well known, play a considerable rôle as a technical term in the Gnostic writings in Greek and Coptic languages, and there can be no doubt but that Mani has taken over this religious term which, as we have shown, had already gained a firm footing in Syriac as a special technical word in the writings of the Gnostics, a fact attested by its occurrence in the Syriac of Thomas. That the Archons are of no small importance in the Gnostic systems of the West, is perfectly conspicuous, and we need not go into details in this respect.³

The question as to from where Mani has got the term Archon(s) is thus to be answered in such a way that the term Archon(s) was very wide-spread in Gnostic circles, both Greek and Syriac speaking, and that this word was a common loanword not only in Syriac, but in many other dialects of Aramaic.⁴ Thus everything speaks for the solution proposed here: Mani has found the

¹ This scene is a common one in Gnostic writings, see e. g. Jonas, *Gnosis und spätantiker Geist*, p. 208, with his reference to Origen C. Cels. VI 31; on this conception cf. also Anz, *Zur Frage nach dem Ursprung des Gnostizismus* p. 11 ff.

² As is often the case, the Greek text has preserved the technical term giving ὁ ἄρχων in this passage, see ed. Bonnet p. 250: 13.

³ See Leisegang, *Die Gnosis* Index s. v. Archon and Archonten. In *Fistis Sophia* a special activity is assigned to the Archons, who are mentioned many times; see Index to the translation by Schmidt, *Koptisch-Gnostische Schriften*, Index s. v. Archonten.

⁴ The same may hold true also in the case of the Greek word βῶλος used by Mani as ܒܠܘܣ. When Burkitt says, "the name of the Bolus, now attested in the Syriac of Ephraim, cannot have come from anything but a Greek source, it suggests to us that Mani drew his inspiration from the West, as much as, if not more than, from the East around him" (*Religion of the Manichees* p. 67); this conclusion would seem to be entirely unwarranted. Firstly we must observe that in his refutation Aphrem says that the guilty Souls "are found like dregs in the midst of that which they call BOLOS" (Mitchell, *Ephraim's Prose Refutations* I p. LXXII, and II p. 236 Corrigenda, Burkitt, *op. cit.* p. 66); we ought to note that Aphrem says "which they (stressed by me) call BOLOS", an expression which *per se* does not imply the statement that Mani himself used this word. Secondly, if it be admitted that even Mani might well have used this Greek term, nothing could forbid us to assume that he had found this

Greek term as a common loanword in Syriac in the technical meaning given it by the Gnostics and possessing the same significance as the indigenous Syriac word.¹ Nothing can conceivably be adduced in order to prove that Mani has borrowed this term and the notion connected with it from any Greek source. The word Archon, we conclude, is thus altogether unsuitable for scholars wishing to prove the dependence of Mani on Greek literature and culture.

Mesopotamian as to its origin is certainly, as Cumont has long ago observed, the locality of the two hostile powers. While the Kingdom of Light dominates in the North, the East, and the West, Darkness holds as its dominion the South.² According to Sumero-Accadian cosmological conceptions, the gods have their habitation in the North, whereas the South is the nether world and the abode of the demons.³

That, moreover, the general cosmological pattern including the seven planets (here as well as in Mandaean literature conceived of as evil beings⁴) and the twelve gates of heaven (met

word circulating as a Greek loan-word in Syriac speaking Gnostic groups. Thirdly, it ought to be emphasized that ܒܠܘܣ, as well as ܒܠܘܣܐ, is a loan-word not only in Syriac but also in other Aramaic dialects in the form ܒܠܘܣ see Dalman, *Aram. Neuhebr. Wörterbuch* s. v. p. 50 a; Lewy, *Wörterbuch u. d. Talm. u. Midr.* I p. 200.

¹ The corresponding idea is expressed in indigenous Syriac with the term ܒܠܘܣܐ, which is e. g. used in the Bardesanite Dialogue on Fate, see *PS* I 2 Index s. v. ܒܠܘܣܐ. In the Acts of Thomas we also find this same term which can accordingly be assumed to be the original Mesopotamian technical term for what is expressed in Greek as ἄρχοντες. In Accadian, we may add, we meet with the word šaltu, st. constr. šališ, ruler, prince, to which the Syriac term is thus only a form in the plural, a formation found also in Accadian even if we have not yet there come across the word šal(i)tāni, but šaltāniš. For the Syriac word cf. Brockelmann, *Grundriss* II p. 701 addit. to I p. 61 n. 2. We may add that ܒܠܘܣܐ is found in the very passage of the Acts of Thomas with which we have been concerned here, i. e. ch. 143 in the Sinaitic fragments, see *Horae Semiticae* III p. 217 the last line, = *Studia Sinaitica* IX p. 30 the last line; *ib.* p. 226 a l. 19; *Studia Sinaitica* IX p. 33 l. 12 = ed. Wright p. c. l. 7.

² Cf. Cumont, *Recherches* II p. 111.

³ Cf. Cumont, *Recherches* II p. 164.

⁴ As correctly observed by Scheftelowitz, *Entstehung der manichäischen Religion*, pp. 8 ff. who also remarks that in the Ethiopic Book of Enoch 18:13 ff. (21:3) the planets are depicted as apostatized and evil powers, *ib.* p. 11.

with also in Mandaean writings¹) is a Mesopotamian inheritance in Manichaeism, goes without saying. The astronomical-astrological ideas prevalent in Manichaean literature are, however, to be understood as belonging to the generally accepted interpretation of the universe, even if originally propagated by Mesopotamian theologians and astrologers.² At the time of Mani's appearance it is highly improbable that any specific Mesopotamian local colouring was to be felt in these conceptions except that the names remained the old Mesopotamian.³

¹ Curiously enough not observed by Scheffelowitz who, on the other hand, points out that they are met with in Enoch 72: 2 ff.; 75: 4 ff.

² See the standard work by Cumont, *Astrology and Religion*.

³ For the Syriac names of the planets see Jensen, *Kosmologie* pp. 134 ff.

CHAPTER III.

The Combat and the Rebels.

Mani taught that when the ruler of Darkness, the *rex tenebrorum* as he is called in the Western tradition, made his assault on the Realm of Light he was opposed by the Primal Man, armed, or clothed, in his Five Light-Elements. The Primus Homo is thus said to be "like a man who dresses himself in armour for battle" (*Theodore bar Kōnay* ed. Pognon p. 127: 19—20 = *CSCO* Script. Syr. II 66, p. 314: 1 f.). According to the description of the fight given in *Fihrist* (Flügel, *Mani*, text p. 54, transl. p. 87 f. = *Fihrist* ed. Flügel p. 329) the Primordial Man and the King of the Dark (here called the Primordial Devil, *'iblis al-ḡadīm*) fought for a long time, but then the First Man was conquered.

This battle has its Mesopotamian counterpart in the combat between Marduk and Tiāmat. There is a moment in this fight which is of special interest in this connexion.

<i>iṭ-ḥi-ma be-lum ḡab-lu-uš ti-wa-</i>	The lord approached to look
<i>wa-ti i-bar-ri</i>	into the heart of Tiāmat,
<i>ša ^DKin-gu ḡa-i-ri-ša i-še'e-a me-</i>	(and) to see the plan of Kingu,
<i>ki-šu</i>	her spouse.
<i>i-na-aṭ-ṭal-ma e-ši ma-lak-šu</i>	He looketh up and is then con-
	fused in his plan,
<i>sa-pi-iḥ ṭe-ma-šu-ma si-ḡa-ti ip-</i>	distracted is his mind and dis-
<i>šit-su</i>	ordered his action.
<i>ù ilū ri-ṣu-šu a-li-ku i-di-šu</i>	Likewise the gods, his helpers,
	who were marching by his side,
<i>i-mu-ru-[ma] ḡar-da a-ša-ri-du ni-</i>	when they saw the valiant hero
<i>ṭil-šu-un i-ši</i>	their vision became blurred.

Enūma Elish IV 65—70, Heidel, *Babylonian Genesis* p. 29.

The question in this case is: who is confounded? Marduk or Kingu? The latest translator, A. Heidel, thinks that it is Kingu